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Proclamation 6791—National Crime Victims' Rights Week

April 26, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every year, more than 36 million people in America become the victims of crime. Offenders prey on our daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, parents, grandparents, and friends. Violent crime is creating fear and insecurity in communities across our Nation.

To ensure justice and promote healing, a grassroots crime victims' movement has worked to enact numerous initiatives in State legislatures across the country—laws that now provide crucial rights for crime victims and their families. As we mark National Crime Victims' Rights Week this year, Americans join in remembering the fallen, in celebrating criminal justice reforms, and in envisioning a future free from violence.

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which I signed into law this past September, ensures that our criminal justice system recognizes the victims. Its provisions include allocution rights for victims of violent crime and sexual abuse, truth in sentencing guidelines to ensure that violent offenders serve longer sentences, and sex offender registries designed to monitor offenders more effectively. This Act will help put 100,000 more police officers on the streets of our communities. And the landmark Violence Against Women Act is the first comprehensive Federal effort to address violence against women.

But no government can be truly effective without the active involvement of its citizens. Victim advocacy—the work of the more than 8,000 organizations and the countless individuals we honor this week—can be a lifeline to emotional survival. When random bullets wound a child, when a battered woman needs shelter in the night, when a rape survivor seeks help—victim advocates are there to comfort and support. Many of our Nation's crime victims and advocates work tirelessly

in schools, neighborhoods, and youth custody facilities. They give faces and names to the statistics of crime, opening young peoples' eyes to the reality of violence and helping to plant seeds of responsibility that can last a lifetime.

We nonetheless recognize that much remains to be done. But with continued partnerships between every level of government, criminal justice and victim advocacy organizations, and crime survivors and their families, America can begin to replace the nightmare of crime with a bright new day of hope.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 23 through April 29, 1995, as "National Crime Victims' Rights Week." I urge all Americans to pause and remember the victims of crime and to join in honoring those who serve crime victims and their families by working to reduce violence, to assist those harmed by crime, and to make our homes and communities safer places in which to live.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 28.

Remarks on Presenting the President's Service Awards

April 27, 1995

Thank you very much, Eli Segal, for your words of introduction and for your outstanding leadership of our national service efforts. And thank you, Marlee Matlin, for your leadership in a volunteer capacity of the most important volunteer efforts in our country.

Just over a week ago we were reminded that there are those who want to see our Nation torn apart. But amid the grief and the

destruction we have also seen how quickly the overwhelming majority of Americans come together to help each other to rebuild and to make this country stronger.

When Hillary and I were in Oklahoma City last Sunday, we saw a community working around the clock to rebuild itself. Compassion and assistance flowed in from all over the United States. Americans were united in a spirit of service. It is that spirit which we honor today.

It gives me tremendous pleasure to be here with all of you to celebrate National Volunteer Week and to honor the recipients of the President's Service Awards for 1995. Today we'll hear stories of ordinary Americans doing extraordinary things, teachers and homemakers, carpenters and business leaders, people from small neighborhood organizations and large corporations. Our honorees comfort the sick and fight illiteracy. They repair our parks and keep our young people out of gangs. They come from all corners of the Nation. They are diverse in age and background. Yet they are united by something larger than all of us, the simple desire to fulfill the promise of American life.

A couple of days ago I was in Iowa for our Rural Conference. Those of us who come from small towns know that we don't have a person to waste in our communities or in our country. Large or small, our communities have never been built with bricks and mortar alone. They are sustained by the faith that there will always be people there to lend a hand.

That's why more than 90 million Americans lend a hand every year—90 million. At a time when the American people are working harder and longer than they have been in the last 10 years at their own jobs, they still find time to volunteer to help others. Americans know we can never be fulfilled as a country unless we are prepared to take responsibility for each other.

I'm proud that we're joined to honor this year's award recipients by two young members of AmeriCorps, Brent Bloom and Izabel De Araugo. They and their fellow corps members are showing that we gain when we give. In return for help with college, they're helping others. AmeriCorps efforts go hand

in hand with the voluntarism we celebrate today. It is a great partnership.

I want to say a special word of appreciation for Brent Bloom. He lives in Oklahoma City where he works in a homeless shelter while studying for a pre-med degree at Oklahoma University. A little more than a week ago, Brent heard the explosion that was felt all around America. He went straight to the Federal building, told the first police officer he saw that he knew emergency first aid, and then spent the rest of the day and well into the night sorting through the wreckage and saving lives. [*Applause*]

In the weeks since, he has been working with Feed the Children, helping children, families, and the extraordinary rescue teams. He deserves our gratitude and the applause you just gave him. He and countless others who are working to heal the wounds from last week's bombing are living proof that we are truly a nation of volunteers. They show us once again that altruism will always triumph over the forces of divisiveness.

Let me say, too, if I might, a word of appreciation to another volunteer who is not here today. When the explosion occurred in Oklahoma City, a nurse named Rebecca Anderson rushed to the bombed Federal building as well to help. She was hit by some falling debris in the building, suffered a hemorrhage and later died. She left behind four children. But even in death, she continued to serve, for she donated her heart for a heart transplant which occurred yesterday and saved the life of one more person. That is the real America, and no matter what else happens, we should never forget it.

You know, voluntary derives from a Latin word which means both wish and will. I cannot imagine a more accurate combination for what we celebrate today; uniting the wish for a better world with the will to make it happen, neighbor to neighbor, community to community.

Each act of service pulls us together and pushes us forward. Let's keep it up.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on the Observance of Freedom Day in South Africa

April 27, 1995

A full year has passed since South Africa embarked on a bold course to build nonracial democracy. Americans vividly remember watching inspiring scenes of the people of South Africa standing patiently in long lines to cast their first votes together. Their work for a democratic future still touches us all.

Under President Mandela's wise leadership, South Africa has taken the road of reconciliation and consensus building. The United States remains determined to assist South Africa in these efforts, through our assistance program, the U.S.-South African Binational Commission launched in March, and a wide array of public and private sector initiatives to support the rebuilding of South Africa.

South Africans are charting a course to meet the country's pressing economic and social needs. The Government of National Unity has promoted sound economic policies. The American private sector—business, private voluntary organizations, and academic institutions—has joined efforts to nurture and sustain democracy and economic growth in South Africa. Over 300 American companies have returned since apartheid ended.

On this Freedom Day, April 27, I congratulate the people of South Africa on their progress and courage. They stand as a symbol of hope in a strife-torn world. The American people wish them every success.

Proclamation 6792—Law Day, U.S.A., 1995

April 27, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our legal system is the foundation on which this Nation was built. It enables us to realize the promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Law protects our homes, our families, and our communities. It secures our borders and safeguards our environment. It is the basis for free markets

and our continued prosperity. And it helps guide our relationships with other lands.

When President John F. Kennedy proclaimed Law Day, U.S.A. in 1962, he reminded us that law, like freedom, demands constant vigilance. We must nurture “through education and example an appreciation of the values of our system of justice and . . . an increased respect for law and for the rights of others as basic elements of our free society.” As we celebrate Law Day this year, it is more important than ever that we rededicate ourselves to reaching these goals.

Today, America's system of jurisprudence is being challenged as never before. Great technological advances are leading us to redefine and expand the ways in which laws apply to us as individuals and as a Nation. From communications to computer software, international trade to environmental protection, our legal system remains an anchor of freedom, even as it evolves to meet the demands of our rapidly changing times.

If we are to further advance the causes of democracy and human dignity around the world, we must not falter in enforcing the rule of law here at home. Laws must be applied as vigorously on Main Street as on the information superhighway. The legal community must help to restore Americans' sense of security and faith in justice. Most important, our laws must continue to fulfill our Founders' ideals of fairness and equality. Working together, we must strive to ensure that tomorrow's generations inherit the truths that have long sustained us as a people and move our Nation forward.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20 of April 7, 1961, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1995, as “Law Day, U.S.A.” I urge the people of the United States to use this occasion to reflect on our heritage of freedom, to familiarize themselves with their rights and responsibilities, and to aid others seeking to affirm their rights under law.

I call upon the legal profession, civic associations, educators, librarians, public officials, and the media to promote the observance of this day through appropriate programs and activities. I also call upon public officials to